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Nearly 1,000 Popular Consumer Products Contain Carcinogenic Estrogens

A January study identified 279 estrogenic compounds commonly found in consumer products that induce mammary tumors in animals, and another 642 chemicals that could increase the risk of breast cancer.

By **Dr. Joseph Mercola**

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Story at a glance:

- Estrogens are linked to serious health risks, including cancer. The National Institutes of Health added steroidal estrogens used in estrogen replacement therapy and oral contraceptives to its list of known human carcinogens in December 2002.
- Synthetic estrogen exposure has surged due to environmental contamination and the widespread use of estrogenic chemicals in consumer products.
- A January study identified 279 estrogenic compounds commonly found in consumer products that induce mammary tumors in animals; and another 642 chemicals that could potentially increase the risk of breast cancer by stimulating estrogen or progesterone signaling.
- Estrogen dominance, characterized by high estrogen levels, is associated with obesity, particularly around the thighs, hips and buttocks.
- Strategies to reduce estrogen exposure include avoiding synthetic products, choosing natural alternatives and supporting liver health. Lifestyle modifications, such as maintaining a healthy weight, minimizing plastic use and managing stress can also help lower your estrogen level and reduce associated health risks.

While estrogen replacement is generally regarded as beneficial, if not crucial, for women entering into menopause, a closer look reveals it can cause severe problems and you do not, in fact, want high levels of estrogen.

Originally called adipin, estrogen got its name from its association with weight gain, as in adipose (fat) tissue. In the mid-1950s, when the drug industry started pushing synthetic estrogens, this knowledge faded from memory.

One of the most infamous early synthetic estrogens prescribed was diethylstilbestrol (DES), which caused fetal malformations and deaths, and cancers in the mothers who took it. DES was eventually withdrawn and banned for use in humans.

DES is not estrogen itself but rather a chemical that mimics estrogen's actions by activating estrogen receptors.

In fact, DES can potentially activate these receptors even more strongly than natural estrogen. This alone is a strong indication that estrogen excess is of serious concern.

Studies looking at the effects of estrogen and estrogenic chemicals only add to the certainty.

Estrogen is carcinogenic

The National Institutes of Health added steroidal estrogens used in estrogen replacement therapy and oral contraceptives to its list of KNOWN human carcinogens all the way back in December 2002.

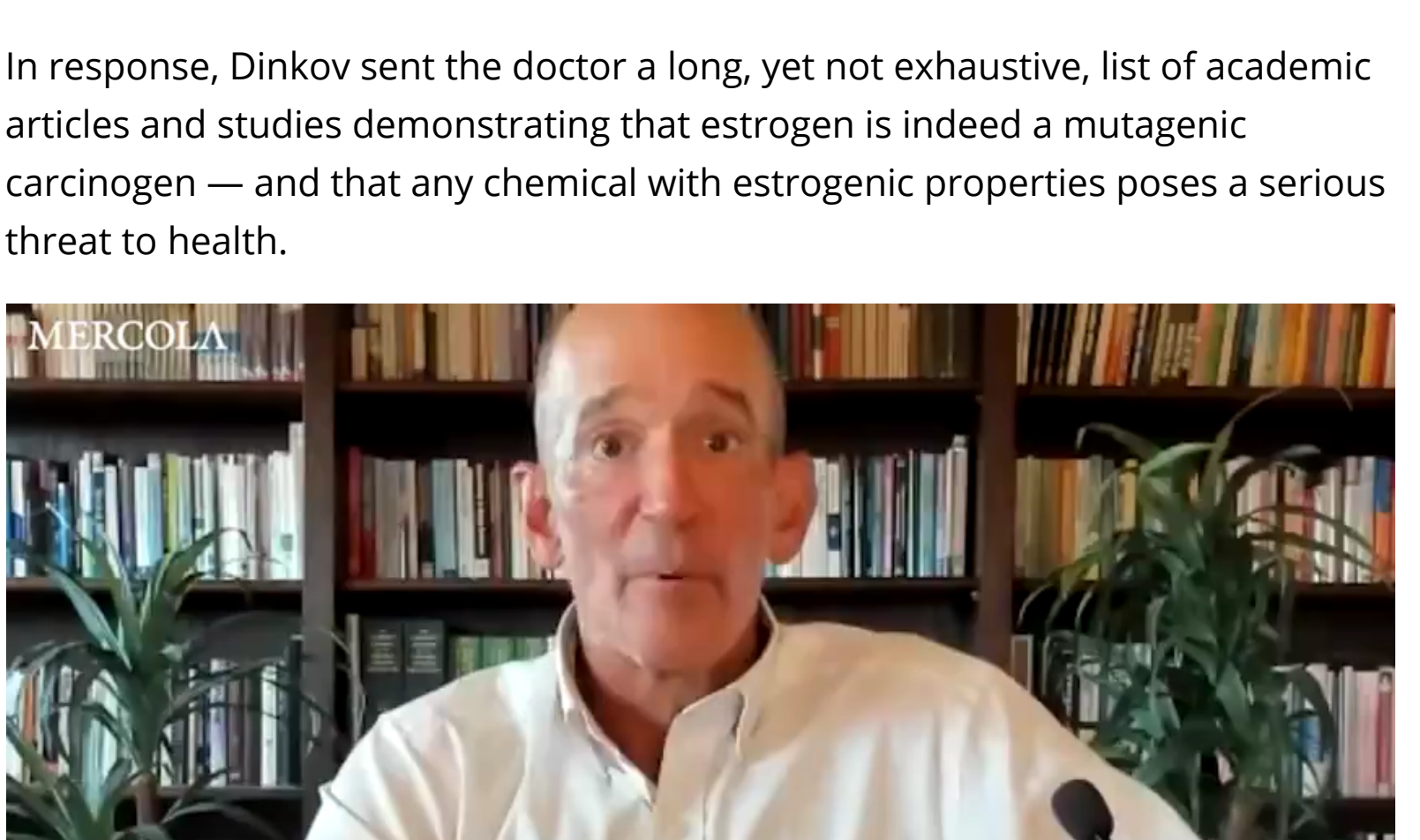
In my mind, estrogen and excess linoleic acid are the two primary reasons for most cancers.

Likewise, the Women's Health Initiative (WHI) studies, which began in 1991, showed estrogen replacement therapy in menopausal women significantly increased the risk of heart attacks, strokes, dementia, Parkinson's disease and cancer, not just in the breast but all female reproductive organs.

In October 2023, I interviewed bioenergetic researcher Georgi Dinkov about the hazards of estrogen. I've included that interview (video below) for your convenience.

As noted by Dinkov in a recent blog post, that interview apparently "struck a nerve" with a doctor who "went through the trouble of writing an extensive blog post trying to debunk the already established fact that estrogen is a carcinogen, by claiming that most of that data stems from the WHI studies, and that those are now considered flawed, ergo estrogen cannot be considered a carcinogen."

In response, Dinkov sent the doctor a long, yet not exhaustive, list of academic articles and studies demonstrating that estrogen is indeed a mutagenic carcinogen — and that any chemical with estrogenic properties poses a serious threat to health.



Hundreds of everyday chemicals linked to increased breast cancer risk

As just one example, a January paper in Environmental Health Perspectives identified 279 estrogenic compounds commonly found in consumer products that induce mammary tumors in animals and another 642 chemicals that could potentially increase the risk of breast cancer by stimulating estrogen or progesterone signaling.

As reported by Environmental Health News:

> "More than 900 chemicals commonly found in consumer products and the environment have been linked to breast cancer risk in a new study.
>
> "The study … identified 921 chemicals that could potentially increase the risk of breast cancer and found that 90% are ubiquitous in consumer products, food and drinks, pesticides, medications and workplaces.
>
> "The list includes chemicals like parabens and phthalates, which are commonly found in makeup, skin and hair care products; and numerous pesticide ingredients, including malathion, atrazine and triclopyr, which are used on food and in household pest control products in the U.S.
>
> "Breast cancer among young women has increased in recent years. Between 2010 and 2019, diagnoses among people 30 to 39 years old increased 19.4%, and among those ages 20 to 29, rates increased 5.3%.
>
> "This change is too fast to be explained by genetics, so researchers have begun looking more closely at potential environmental causes for the disease.
>
> "A 2020 study found that women who used chemical hair straighteners more than six times a year had about a 30% higher risk of breast cancer than those who didn't use chemical straighteners.
>
> "Those products typically contain one or more of the chemicals identified in the new study as increasing the chances of getting breast cancer."

Everyday items may expose you to hazardous levels of estrogen

In modern times, many synthetic compounds, especially plasticizing compounds, have been developed that have estrogenic properties. Other terms for such compounds are endocrine disruptors and xenoestrogens.

DES is strikingly similar in composition to bisphenol-A (BPA), which the U.S. Food and Drug Administration banned for use in baby bottles and sippy cups in 2012.

Many pesticides, preservatives, organic pollutants, drugs and even textiles also have estrogenic activity. Polyester and spandex, for example, contain high levels of estrogen-mimicking BPA.

As noted by Dinkov:

> "It looks like we are bathing 24×7 in a toxic sea of almost 1,000 chemicals with such properties (aka xenoestrogens), and given their ubiquity in food, drugs, industry, household, hospitals, and even nature it is little surprise the population of Western countries is sicker than ever.
>
> "Considering the sheer number of chemicals involved and the near impossibility of avoiding them, keeping the metabolic rate high (helps with excretion of xenoestrogens) and usage of anti-estrogenic chemicals (eg. vitamin E, progesterone, pregnenolone, aspirin, DHT, antihistamines, etc) becomes that much more important."

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The physiological role of estrogen

Estrogen's carcinogenic properties can in part be explained by its ability to increase cells' ability to hold water. This is why women with estrogen dominance are prone to edema (water retention). Cellular swelling is both a characteristic of the cellular stress response and a signal for cellular proliferation.

During the follicular phase of the menstrual cycle, estrogen stimulates the uterine lining and follicles to swell and multiply in preparation for the fertilization of an egg. Similarly, during and after pregnancy, breast tissue swells and grows larger to facilitate milk production.

But cellular swelling and proliferation are also a hallmark of cancer. Indeed, the word oncology comes from the Greek word "oncos," which simply means swelling.

In his 1997 book, "From PMS to Menopause: Female Hormones in Context," biologist Ray Peat stated that estrogen had been shown to replicate the shock phase of the stress reaction in animals.

According to Peat, the physiological purpose of estrogens is to stimulate cell division by triggering water uptake by the cell.

This is one of the greatest books on health I have ever read. Currently, it is out of print and being sold by resellers for $350.

I hope to connect with Ray's widow later this year and get permission to republish his book with a new publishing company I am starting called Joy House and hope we can republish it later this year.

Peat believed that estrogen is a metabolic inhibitor that slows down energy production in the cell.

Otto Warburg, after whom the Warburg Effect was named, stated that "the prime cause of cancer is the replacement of the respiration of oxygen in normal body cells by a fermentation of sugar."

In simpler terms, this is when your body has more than enough oxygen to burn (oxidize) glucose in your mitochondria but instead shuttles glucose outside the mitochondria into the cytoplasm to oxidize or burn in glycolysis and produce lactate. This is the classic form of energy production in cancer cells.

It is not that cancer burns sugar for fuel; it is that cancer cells are sick and unable to effectively burn glucose in their mitochondria so they must shift to inefficiently burn glucose in glycolysis in the cytoplasm, despite having enough oxygen present. This is typically due to mitochondrial metabolic dysfunction.

Essentially, this means anything that limits or prevents your cells' ability to efficiently burn glucose in your mitochondria is capable of causing cancer, and according to Peat, this is precisely what estrogen is doing.

Obesity, especially in women, is estrogen-driven

Estrogen can also promote the accumulation of fat around the thighs, hips and buttocks through several mechanisms. For starters, it influences where fat is stored in the body. Women tend to store fat in these areas due to having higher estrogen levels than men. This pattern is often referred to as the "pear-shaped" body type.

Estrogen also promotes the differentiation and proliferation of fat cells (adipocytes) in the subcutaneous fat layer, which is particularly prevalent in the thighs, hips and buttocks and therefore leads to increased fat storage in these areas.

As mentioned, estrogen also plays a role in regulating metabolism, including glucose and lipid metabolism. Higher estrogen levels can promote the uptake and storage of fatty acids in adipose tissue, contributing to fat accumulation in the lower body.

Hormonal interactions and cellular signaling also play a role. Estrogen interacts with other hormones involved in fat metabolism, such as insulin and cortisol, and these interactions can influence fat deposition and distribution in the body, favoring storage in the lower body regions.

Lastly, adipose tissue contains estrogen receptors, and estrogen signaling can directly affect the function and activity of fat cells. It promotes the expression of genes involved in fat storage and inhibits genes associated with fat breakdown.

Fasting Isn't the answer

Contrary to popular belief, extended fasting isn't the answer if you're trying to reshape a pear-shaped body type. The reason for this is that chronic fasting often ends up burning more muscle than fat.

As reported in the Times of India seven years ago:

> "Dr. Purwa Duggal says stubborn fat in areas such as abdomen, thighs, hips, butt, etc are linked to high estrogen. Prolonged starvation does not necessarily mean burning fat. It may initially cause muscle wasting or utilization of glycogen stores.
>
> "Catecholamines, which are fight or flight hormones produced in the body in response to stress, are required to burn fat.
>
> "Blood flow to stubborn fat areas is usually very poor, as a result, the catecholamines are unable to reach the area to mobilize the fat. Even if the fat is mobilized, while it continues to be in the blood stream, it may get re-deposited in the original areas,' she adds."

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How to lower your estrogen load

One of the most important strategies aside from avoiding estrogen and xenoestrogens is to take natural progesterone. Most formulations are not effective as they are oral or transdermal.

Ideally, it should be dissolved in a high-quality vitamin E with MCT oil and rubbed on mucous membranes. Typical doses are 25 to 50 mg once or twice a day.

Considering the health risks associated with estrogen excess, here are some commonsense strategies that can help you limit your exposure and lower your estrogen load:

- **Avoid synthetic estrogens** — Minimize exposure to synthetic estrogens, such as those found in hormone replacement therapy and oral contraceptives. Consult with a qualified health care professional about alternative treatments and/or contraceptive methods with lower estrogen content.
- **Choose natural products** — Opt for natural and organic personal care products, including makeup, skincare and hair care items, to reduce exposure to synthetic chemicals like parabens and phthalates, which have estrogenic properties.
- **Limit pesticide exposure** — Choose organic produce whenever possible to reduce exposure to pesticides, many of which have estrogenic effects. Washing fruits and vegetables thoroughly can also help remove pesticide residues.
- **Rethink your household products** — Many household cleaning products, laundry detergents and air fresheners contain chemicals with estrogenic properties. Swap them out for natural, nontoxic alternatives or make your own cleaning solutions using vinegar, baking soda and essential oils instead.
- **Avoid plastic containers** — Minimize the use of plastic containers and food packaging, which can leach estrogenic compounds into food and beverages. Instead, opt for glass or stainless steel containers for food storage and water bottles.
- **Maintain a healthy weight** — Aim for a healthy weight and body composition through a balanced diet and regular exercise. Excess body fat, particularly around the thighs, hips, and buttocks, can contribute to higher estrogen levels.
- **Support liver health** — Support liver function, as the liver plays a crucial role in metabolizing and eliminating excess estrogen from the body. Eat a nutrient-rich diet, limit alcohol consumption, and consider incorporating liver-supporting herbs and supplements, such as milk thistle or dandelion root.
- **Promote hormonal balance** — Explore natural approaches to promote hormonal balance, such as consuming foods rich in cruciferous vegetables (such as broccoli, cauliflower and kale) and flaxseeds, which contain compounds that help support estrogen metabolism and detoxification.
- **Reduce stress** — Manage stress through relaxation techniques like meditation, deep breathing exercises, yoga or spending time in nature. Chronic stress can disrupt hormone balance, including estrogen levels, so prioritizing stress reduction is essential.

Originally published by Mercola.

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2 0 Reply

Susan Gordon
15 days ago
I check all my cosmetic and personal care products with the EWG (Environmental Working Group) database. It is extremely helpful. You even have to look at products that are listed as part of a "clean" line, as while some may be EWG verified, or a 1 or 2 on their rating scale, some may be rated highly toxic due to one or more carcinogenic additive. Baking soda, essential oils, and vinegar (for cleaning) are useful in so many ways.
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Concerned WYO Citizen → Susan Gordon
9 days ago
there is also an app called Yuka which I find is pretty accurate to my knowledge. You can scan products on the little bar codes and it will pull up a rating and also explanations of the no, low, moderate and high risk ingredients.
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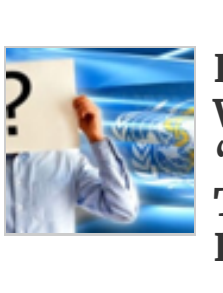
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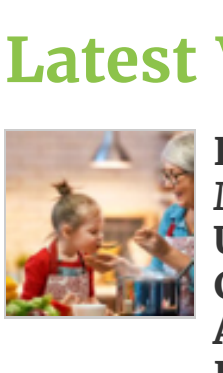
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